

Good Morning Secretary Rey: I am David Bull. While I live in Columbia, CT., we own a 200 year old grain farm in Ohio. I will address questions 1,3 and 6 in my remarks.

The long term objective of federal US farm policy must be maintenance of viable food production capability; i.e., food security. It must insure young people have the education and access to capital to be able to farm, and insure sufficient quality land is available to grow this food. The Farm Bill is only the tool to make this happen.

My first point is to encourage expansion of Sec 1238I, subchapter B – Farmland Protection program. We sold a conservation easement of our Ohio acreage to a Trust specifically to block urban development and perpetuate local farm capacity. Federal policy should emphasize major expansion of easement instruments to enable productive soil reserves for our future national security.

Second, Tom Friedmann recently told us in the “World is Flat” that global consumers will purchase most efficiently where production costs are lowest. There are no more artificial boundaries. The 2007 Farm Bill should facilitate expanded international trade in concert with the Departments of State and Commerce. Food must replace “widgets” as a key export base to overcome the burgeoning trade deficit. Legislation must demand strategic agricultural trade, not perpetuate myopic protectionism.

Third, Land Grant Universities were created to champion education for the common man. Regrettably, these same universities have regressed into research, with results archived and isolated. I urge you to reinstate the function of the Cooperative Extension System as a key transfer of knowledge back to the rural and urban population to assist old and young alike for optimum economic production, nutrition, and youth development. Rural Development cannot progress without educated people.

I appreciate the opportunity to make these points and encourage your consideration of the issues I have raised.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
SECRETARIAT, USDA

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